

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
USMISSION GENEVA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY CANBERRA IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 131259

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SREF

SUBJECT: AUSTRALIAN APPROACH TO UNHCR

REF: STATE 111014

1. AUSTRALIAN MINISTER BIRCH INFORMED DEPT OF SUBSTANCE
OF UNHCR'S LETTER TO AUSTRALIAN MINISTER OF IMMIGRATION
AND ETHNIC AFFAIRS REPLYING TO MINISTER'S MESSAGE OF
MAY 17 REGARDING INDOCHINESE REFUGEES, A COPY OF WHICH HAS
BEEN PASSED TO US. MINISTER HAD WRITTEN UNHCR INFORMING
HIM OF NEW AUSTRALIAN POLICY TO ACCEPT 9,000 INDOCHINESE
REFUGEES IN 12 MONTHS BEGINNING JULY 1, 1978, AND MAKING
VARIOUS POINTS TO HIM OUTLINED IN PARA 5 OF AUSTRALIAN-U.S.
SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS CONTAINED REFTEL. KEY POINTS IN
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HIGH COMMISSIONER'S REPLY WERE AS FOLLOWS:

A. THE HIGH COMMISSIONER WOULD FURTHER STRENGTHEN THE
UNGCR PRESENCE IN THAILAND AND IN THE REGION COVERED BY
HIS REPRESENTATIVE IN KUALA LUMPUR; SOME OF THE ADDI-
TIONAL STAFF WHICH HAD BEEN ASSIGNED TO THOSE AREAS HAD
ALREADY BEGUN TO ARRIVE.

B. THE HIGH COMMISSIONER DID NOT CONSIDER THAT A
PERMANENT REPEAT PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE WAS REQUIRED IN

INDONESIA, BUT HE WAS PREPARED TO REVIEW THE NEED FOR ONE
BASED ON THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS.

C. REGARDING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A TRANSIT CENTER IN
SINGAPORE, THE HIGH COMMISSIONER HAD STILL RECEIVED NO
REPLY FROM THE SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT TO HIS LETTER ON THE
SUBJECT.

2. COMMENT; THE DEPT BELIEVES THERE IS A NEED FOR A
UNHCR REPRESENTATIVE TO BE STATIONED IN INDONESIA TO
ENCOURAGE THE GOI TO PROVIDE TEMPORARY SAFE HAVEN TO
BOAT REFUGEES RATHER THAN SENDING THEM ON TO AUSTRALIA.
ONCE THE THE NEW 25,000 PAROLE PROGRAM IS APPROVED, WE
MAY WISH TO APPROACH THE HIGH COMMISSIONER ON THIS, ON
THE SINGAPORE TRANSIT CENTER, AND ON OTHER MATTERS
OUTLINED IN REFTTEL.

3. IF CANBERRA CAN OBTAIN FROM GOA COPY OF HIGH
COMMISSIONER'S LETTER TO MINISTER MAC KELLAR, PLEASE
POUCH COPY TO DEPT. CHRISTOPHER

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